

Special Delivery

Among the finishing touches to Sinclair Hall, *ARMOR* Magazine's new home at Fort Knox, was the placement of two static displays at the corners of the building facing Brooks Field. One of them was the prototype for the XM-803, a 1970's design that grew out of a joint U.S.-German effort to build a common main battle tank, the MBT-70 Project. The XM-803 was an attempt to salvage the project when the Germans dropped out, but funding was cut off when it was decided that even the simplified XM-803 design was too complex. Many of the lessons learned on the XM-803 were applied successfully to the later M1 Abrams design.

The problem with placing the tank on its circular concrete pad was that the tank had no engine, so it would have to be rolled into place carefully.

The building contractors prepared the way by spray painting dotted lines across the street and continuing onto Brooks Field to help the HET driver line up his trailer. After several unsuccessful approaches, the trailer was lined up and its 10 hydraulically adjustable wheel stations were set so the trailer was perfectly level. Then the ramps were dropped and the XM-803 front towing points were attached to winch cables on the HET. Another cable from a backhoe was attached to the rear of the XM-803, allowing the backhoe to slowly pull the tank off the trailer and down the ramp while the HET's winch cables kept it from rolling out of control. It took several hours to winch 56 tons of engine-less tank into place.

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